

# ABOUT VISUAL ARTISTS

## “Apsáalooke Beauty: The Photography of Erika Haight”

Through Sept. 12 at the Western Heritage Center in Billings with a reception Aug. 7

Artist’s website: [erikahaightphotography.com](http://erikahaightphotography.com)



“Apsáalooke Beauty” by Erika Haight

“Apsáalooke Beauty” is a striking collection of traditional black and white fine-art photography by Erika Haight that honors the people of the Crow Nation. A gifted storyteller, Haight combines a bold, clean perspective with negative space and framing to elicit strong emotional response.

The photographs reflect the Crow people’s by-gone traditions, and what remains in their absence. The images celebrate human resilience, family, and a rich cultural heritage.

The award-winning photographer was born and raised in Montana and currently resides in Roundup, where she has a photography studio. She’s devoted the past four years to

documenting and spending time with her adopted Crow family. She credits “the kindness, love, and acceptance of the Real Bird family” with giving her a unique perspective of contemporary Crow life.

The images in “Apsáalooke Beauty” reflect that ease and closeness, capturing intimate moments of children at play, compelling portraits, and glimpses of reservation life.

Haight is a graduate of the New York Institute of Photography. Among a long list of accomplishments, her work has appeared in, and won awards from, *Cowboys & Indians*, *Range* and *Black and White* magazines, won a Nevada Press Association Award, and took third place in the Ex Arte Equinus International Competition (and was published in *Ex Art Equinus* 4).

“I believe that black and white images remove distraction, forcing the viewer to look past outward appearances and into the soul of the subject,” she writes.

## Andrea Moon, New Works

July 24-Aug. 10 at O. Gallery in Livingston, with artist Brooke White

Artist’s website: [andreamoon.com](http://andreamoon.com)

Red Lodge artist Andrea Moon says she creates sculptures “to confront personal transitions, reminisce about vulnerable layers, and challenge structure.”

She grew up in northwest Ohio and earned her BFA at Bowling Green State University; she completed her MFA at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, and now serves as the residency and communications coordinator of the Red Lodge Clay Center.

Along the way, she was a visiting assistant professor at Texas A&M International University in ceramics and sculpture, and an artist-in-residence at the Arrowmont School of Art and Craft in Gatlinburg, TN, and the Red Lodge Clay Center.

In 2012, she participated in an artist-invite-artist group show at Watershed Center for the Ceramic Arts in Newcastle, ME. She was chosen as a finalist for the Raphael Founder’s Prize by the Society of Contemporary Craft in Pittsburgh, PA, and her artwork will travel through April 2016 with the related exhibition.

Her current sculptural forms explore domesticity. “As bricks are used to build a home, I build with multiple clay parts to make a larger vessel,” she writes. “As I build these forms, I am also exploring different ideas of shelters and dwellings as a means to find a sense of place and home.”

Her work also reflects a sense of balance and “graciousness toward my present, past, and future.”

## Mark Baumbach: “Strata”

Aug. 6-31 at Walking Man Frame Shop and Gallery in Whitefish, with a reception during Gallery Night, 6-9 p.m. Aug. 6

Artist website: [markbaumbach.com](http://markbaumbach.com)

Mark Baumbach was born and raised in Missoula, joined the Marine Corps for a tour of duty, and then earned a BFA in painting from The University of Montana, where he met his wife, Shannon, a fellow artist.

Upon recognizing the expressive quality of abstraction in 1997, Baumbach began developing his artistic process into an emotionally expressive and intellectually stimulating abstract painting style.

“I have a passion for making things happen on the canvas,” writes

the artist. “The dynamic and expressive qualities of abstraction are what drive my work, but nature is what defines it.”

Concentrating on the formal aspects of art, he uses professional painting methods, raw technique, and an intuitive process to compose his images. His paintings are often full of raw energy and movement, yet refined and composed into a unique, cohesive style.

Art enthusiasts across the United States have purchased his work for private and public collections. His work has also been used as set backdrops for Whitefish Theatre Company and Alpine Theatre Project, won awards, and been displayed in art galleries and businesses in Montana.

“I love the challenge of making an engaging composition using only the artistic principles as a starting point,” says the Whitefish artist.

## Brenda Wolf, “The Wild Side”

Aug. 1-31 at 4 Ravens Gallery in Missoula with a reception 5-7 p.m. Aug. 7

Artist’s website: [www.brendawolf.com](http://www.brendawolf.com)



“Zelda” by Brenda Wolf

While artist Brenda Wolf calls Great Falls home, she says, “my heart is in the wild.”

It shows in her larger-than-life portraits of animals, typically painted in oils and pastels. She’s won numerous national and international awards including, most recently, the Best Critter award at the Dana Gallery’s “Icons of the West” show in Missoula.

Originally from New York City, Wolf was drawn

to Montana’s wide-open spaces, rugged mountains – and the allure of cowboys – in 1998. A graduate of the School of Visual Arts in New York City, she has taught at Paris Gibson Square Museum of Art, the University of Great Falls, and Great Falls College MSU.

Wolf’s paintings belong to a diverse group of collectors, hanging on the walls of the CIA in Washington, DC, and in the homes of world-renowned composers and well-known professional athletes.

The imagery, she says, emerges from her subconscious and represents “some part of my emotional self.”

“Each animal speaks to me visually, coming to me in random dreams or thoughts, which I then translate into sketches, and finally a painting,” she says.

The artist paints with her fingers and hands. “Early on I felt I wasn’t connecting with my feelings or making the visceral leap from painting to viewer,” she says. “So, some 30-odd years ago, I put down the brushes to capture that expression more closely and I haven’t looked back since.”

## Randi O’Brien, “Alas, for the pelicans!”

Through Sept. 11 at Paris Gibson Square Museum of Art in Great Falls

Artist’s website: [www.randiobrien.com](http://www.randiobrien.com)

“Alas, for the pelicans! Their golden age is past; but it has much exceeded in duration that of man,” wrote Captain Matthew Flinders in the early 1800s during a voyage to Australia.

For ceramic artist and educator Randi O’Brien, pelicans became a symbol of Montana, “a poignant metaphor for an individual that is paired and banded to not only a partner, but also a region.”

The series was inspired by two sightings of the giant birds: the first was of a dead pelican that she saw the week before she left Montana to begin a new career in New York. The day she returned to Montana, “I came upon an over-wintering pelican. He sat in the morning river steam, motionless.”

Her dramatic life-sized clay sculptures pay homage “to the literal and metaphorical births and deaths. It is an accolade to being banded and paired. It is an apologue of a bird, or an individual, in a state with outstretched borders that provides a ring of security and captivity.”

O’Brien grew up in Colorado and earned both a MFA in ceramics and a MA in art history from The University of Montana. She was the gallery director for the School of Art at Montana State University in Bozeman and for the Rosalie “Roz” Steiner Art Gallery in Batavia, NY, and an adjunct ceramics professor at Flathead Valley Community College in Kalispell. She’s currently an assistant professor of ceramics at MSU Billings. Her work has appeared in exhibitions across the United States.

The former fly-fishing guide, rafting guide, and ski instructor continues to spend her evenings on the rivers with her husband and young daughter, and her winters in the backcountry.



“Reign in Desert” by Mark Baumbach



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## Send your submissions for About Visual Arts

With About Visual Arts, *State of the Arts* continues to profile living Montana artists (no students, please), whose work is the focus of a current exhibit (on display during some portion of the two months covered by the current issue of *State of the Arts*).

Submissions must include:

- A digital image of the artist’s work, with title of the piece (at least 200 dpi and 500kb);
- A brief bio and description of the artist’s work;
- Dates and title of exhibit; and
- The gallery or museum name, town and phone number.

MAC will select submissions that reflect a cross-section of gender, geography, styles and ethnicity, and are from a mix of public and private galleries and museums.

Deadline for submissions for the October/November/December issue is Tuesday, Sept. 1. Send submissions to [writeus@livelytimes.com](mailto:writeus@livelytimes.com) with About Visual Arts in the subject line.



“Chapter Thirty Six” by Andrea Moon



“Pelican 2” by Randi O’Brien

About Visual Artists is compiled by Kristi Niemeyer